



TENnderCARE

✓ Check In ✓ Check Up ✓ Check Back

TENNESSEE'S EPSDT PROGRAM

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1
SPRING 2008

Can We Talk?

News and Information for Teen and Young Adult TENnderCare Members

Welcome!

Welcome to the first quarter 2008 edition of **"Can We Talk?"** a quarterly newsletter on health tips for teens and young adults who are TLC members. **Here's to a happy, healthy life!**

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So, you're feeling great. No need to go to a doctor, right?

WRONG!

Consider a yearly TENnderCare checkup as a tune-up for your body to make sure you

keep running in tiptop shape. You take your car in for a regular tune-up. You should do no less for your body! Like machines, our bodies need proper care to keep running.

Even if you think your body machine is doing great, you should still see your doctor or nurse for a checkup every year.

Your doctor or nurse who is your Primary Care Provider (PCP) knows you better than anyone. Your PCP is the main person you should go to for your care. Your primary doctor or nurse should be able to take care of most of your medical needs. This includes preventive care and treatment for new medical problems. Your PCP is your **"medical home"**. However, you may choose to go to one of the public health department clinics for your TENnderCare exam. You might also be able to have your checkup at your own school, if the exam is offered there.

The good news is that the checkup is FREE if you are a TennCare member under the age of 21. When you call to schedule a checkup, make sure you say it is for a TENnderCARE or EPSDT well-care checkup. This lets the PCP know how much time to set for your appointment so you get a complete exam.

Your PCP can help keep you healthy. He/she can find little problems and treat them before they become big problems. Going to the doctor may not be on anyone's "favorite things to do" list, but it is a lot better to get a checkup when you are well than wait until you have serious problems.

KEEP ON TOP OF YOUR HEALTH: Get **FREE** Checkups Every Year



Do you think that you are too old to get a regular annual checkup?

The answer should be **"No."** Your body is changing, and a doctor's visit gives you the chance to ask questions about anything, including sex, peer pressure and getting along with your family.

What to Expect at a TENNderCARE Checkup

Here's what happens at a TENNderCare checkup (sometimes called a well-care

checkup, a yearly physical or an EPSDT exam):

- Expect to answer questions about your family history and any health problems you may have. (Make a list of things you want to discuss with your doctor or nurse.)
- A staffperson will give you a gown to change into.
- Your weight and height will be measured.
- You will be given a hearing and vision test.

- Your finger may be pricked for a blood sample.
- Or you may get a shot.

You Deserve It!

You deserve to live a healthy life. Preventive health goes a long way. Get active in basketball, dance, football, cheerleading, baseball, hiking, scouts, wrestling, swimming, or other sport activities.

Go to your PCP every year for a checkup! Remember, you should never be ashamed to seek medical help.



Do sweet treats affect your teeth? **YES**, food or drinks with a lot of sugar may give you cavities. The bacteria (germs) in your mouth love sugars found in many foods and drinks. The bacteria feed on the sugars producing acids that hurt the enamel or hard surface of your teeth. If you eat or drink a lot of sugar, and don't brush your teeth afterwards, more damage and cavities can occur.

It is **important** to choose food and drinks wisely, and think before you eat.

Here are some tips that will help:

- Eat a healthy diet of fruit, vegetables, meat, bread and milk.
- Choose healthy snacks that are low in sugar such as apples, carrot sticks, yogurt or low fat cheese.
- Drink lots of water.
- Don't drink soft drinks. They contain a lot of sugar. A can of regular soda has 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- Brush your teeth thoroughly after food or drink that contains sugar. Remember the longer the sugar sits on your teeth, the more damage it can cause!
- Brush thoroughly two times each day with fluoride toothpaste and floss one time each day.
- Visit your dentist regularly for checkups and cleanings.

Dentists have known for a long time that having a healthy mouth helps you have a healthy body. To stay healthy, you should see your dentist every six months, and brush and floss your teeth daily.

If you have TennCare you have TENNderCARE (EPSDT) dental services until you become 21 years old. These services include FREE regular 6-month checkups, fluoride treatments and sealants.

If you have TennCare, call Doral Customer Service at **1-888-233-5935**, or visit the Web site at www.doralusa.com.

- For help finding a dentist.
- For questions about your TennCare dental benefits.
- For help with interpretation and translation.
- For help with transportation

Let's face it. Everyone wants to be a winner. And what guy wouldn't want to look "ripped" or have the body that girls admire? But if you're not careful, you could sacrifice your good health for temporary glory.

Consider this. You probably think that sports supplements are safe to use and good for you because they're sold at gyms and health food stores. You might be right. But you might be wrong.

The dangers of sports supplements stem from the fact that little is known about them and their side effects on the body. Because the sports supplement industry is largely unregulated, there's no way to know what or how pure the ingredients are. Side effects of sports supplements include:

- Allergic reactions
- Stomach cramps
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Weight gain
- Water retention

What about performance-enhancing drugs or PEDs? Some of the most common PEDs are steroids and growth hormones. If you use PEDs to get an edge, you're not only cheating; you're

playing a losing game. In addition to severe acne, PEDs can cause serious health problems—even death. You won't care how fast or strong you are if you have to deal with some of these problems:

- Baldness
- Muscle cramps and muscle strain
- Sleep problems
- Heat stroke
- Severe mood swings and depression
- Seizures
- Irregular heart beat
- Heart attack
- Stroke and blood clots
- Abnormal kidney function
- Liver damage
- Cancers

The only way to be sure any supplements are safe is to check with a doctor, nutritionist, or other medical professional. If you have questions, you can always call **TLC's 24 hour Nurse Helpline** and talk to a registered nurse. The number is **1-800-473-6523**, and the call is **FREE**.

Remember, if you are a TLC member under age 21, visits to your primary care provider (PCP) are FREE under the TENNderCare Program.

Energy Drinks GOOD OR BAD?

You may not need to spend money on energy drinks to get the energy you need.

In fact, some so-called energy drinks may do more harm than good. That's because caffeine is one of the main ingredients in many energy drinks.

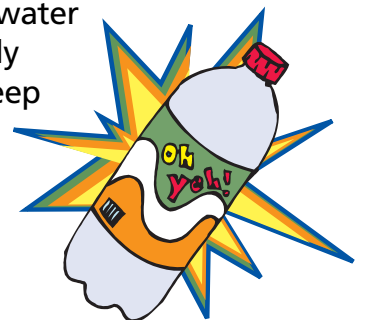
Caffeine is a stimulant. It can increase reaction time and alertness. But, it can also increase blood pressure and heart rate. This could be bad for people with risk factors for heart disease. Caffeine can cause nervousness, upset stomach, headaches

and sleep problems. These side effects can seem even worse if you are taking certain medicines.

Besides caffeine and sugar, some brands of energy drinks may have ingredients that have not been tested for safety.

Your best bet for getting energy is the natural way:

- ✓ Eat a well-balanced diet
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Exercise regularly
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep



STRAIGHT TALK

Just for Girls

"My periods are not regular. What's wrong with me?" If this is your situation, there are some things you need to know.

Many girls have very irregular periods during the first couple years of menstruating. In fact, irregular is regular for many girls. Menstruating or a period happens when all parts of a girl's reproductive system have matured and are working together.

The levels of your hormones determine the amount of blood and how long your period lasts. Since you are still growing in your teen years, your hormone levels are constantly changing. This can account for your period being different from one to the next.

In addition, young women don't always ovulate every month when they first get their periods. There's no sure way for a girl to know which month she is ovulating and which she is not. You should assume you can get pregnant each and every month, even if your periods are irregular.

A girl's first period can happen anytime from about age 10 to age 16. Just as the onset of your period can vary, so can the length and the number of days between cycles. A cycle is the

number of days from the start of one period to the start of the next. Menstrual cycles can be anywhere between 21 and 45 days for the first couple of years. The cycle usually shortens to 21 to 34 days. The amount of time that you may have your period can vary from two or three days to seven days or longer.

Other things can also cause irregular periods or make your periods stop. They include:

- Too much exercise
- Eating disorders
- Poor nutrition
- Heavy stress

If you are sexually active and skip a period, you should still see a doctor to see if you are pregnant. If you have questions, you can always call **TLC's 24 hour Nurse Helpline** and talk to a registered nurse. The number is **1-800-473-6523**, and the call is **FREE**.

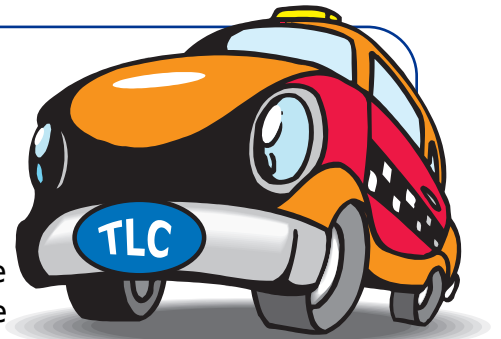
Remember, if you are a TLC member under age 21, visits to your primary care provider (PCP) are FREE under the TENNderCare Program.

Sources: National Institute of Child Health & Human Development and the Food and Drug Administration

FREE RIDE AVAILABLE!

If you need a ride to the PCP's office for your TENNderCare checkup, TLC will see that you have a ride. No problem. It is free.

Just call 385-0025 if you live in Shelby County. If you live outside Shelby County, please call 888-385-4969. To schedule a ride, call at least five days before your appointment. Also, please call if you need to cancel your ride.



Click in to New Teen Website



When should teens get a free checkup? The answer—every year from the age of 13 through age 20—is one of many answers you can find about health on a new website just for teens!

Check out the site: www.tennessee.gov/tenncare/tenndercare/teen/teen_index.htm

You'll find information on health, food and fitness tips, school violence, dating violence and many other topics.

BEWARE

Of Staph Infections

As a teen, you know that pimples and zits can be common. But beware of skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils. They are often red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. They may be caused by a type of bacteria called staphylococcus (staf-uh-low-**kah**-kus), or staph for a shorter name.

Several types of staph bacteria exist. Staph bacteria live in the nose and on skin surfaces of healthy people. But when the skin is broken, staph bacteria can enter the wound and cause an infection. Most of these skin infections are minor and can be treated without antibiotics.

However, a staph infection that is showing up in schools can become serious because it is resistant to many antibiotics. If the infection enters the blood stream, it can cause serious health problems, even death in some cases.

Schools have many elements that make spreading of the infection possible. In some cases, schools

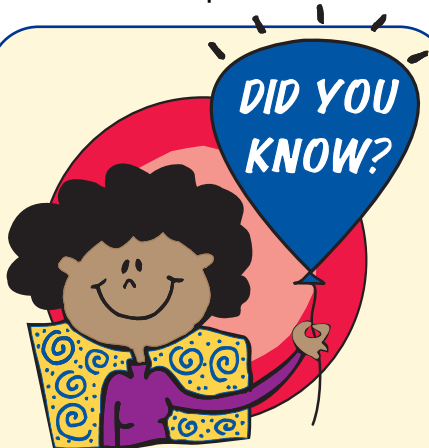
have even closed to be cleaned and disinfected because of the widespread infection. Factors of spreading include:

- Crowding—skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a Staph infection
- Frequent contact, such as in sports
- Open wounds
- Sharing of infected items

Protect Yourself

- ✓ **Keep clean.** Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Shower or bathe daily.
- ✓ **Cover cuts and scrapes** with a clean dry bandage until healed.
- ✓ **Do not share personal items.** Avoid sharing towels, razors or clothing that has come into contact with your bare skin. Use clothing or a towel between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches. Disinfect sports equipment after each use.
- ✓ **Keep surfaces clean** that often come in contact with your skin.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



The first cellular phone call was made on April 3, 1973 by its inventor, Motorola's Martin Cooper. The device was inspired by Star Trek's Captain Kirk's flip open communicator.



NEED HELP MAKING AN APPOINTMENT?



Call TLC Customer Service at **725-7100** in Memphis or Shelby County, or **800-473-6523** if you live outside Shelby County.

No one is treated in a different way because of race, color, religion, birthplace, language, sex, age, or disability. Do you think you've been treated unfairly? Do you have more questions?

Do you need more help?

You can make a free call to the Family Assistance Service Center at 1-866-311-4287.

In Nashville, call 743-2000.

Interpretation and translation services are free to the member.

For more information please call Customer Service at 725-7100 (Shelby County) or 800-473-6523 (outside of Shelby County).

Para pedir una información en español, por favor llame 725-7100, (condado Shelby) or 800-473-6523, (condado exterior de Shelby).

Do you need help? Is it because you have a health, mental health, learning problem or a disability? OR, do you need help in another language? If so, you have a right to get help, and TLC can help you. Call TLC at 1-800-473-6523. If you have a hearing problem, you can call TennCare on a TTY/TDD machine.

The TTY/TDD number is 1-866-771-7043.

Quotables

"It's choice, not chance, that determines your destiny."

~ **Jean Nidetch**

"If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to it!"

~ **Jonathan Winters**

"One kind word can warm three winter months."

~ **Japanese proverb**

"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living."

~ **Gail Sheehy**



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